

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-07 OES-06

AGRE-00 FEAE-00 ERDA-05 EA-07 /120 W

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R 271405Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7355

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

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USCINCEUR AND USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLADS

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT

SUBJECT: MINTOFF LECTURES THE MALTESE AGAIN ABOUT HARD TIMES

AHEAD

REF: VALLETTA 0005,

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: REPEATING MANY OF THE THEMES HE EMPHASIZED IN HIS NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS (REFTEL), PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF DELIVERED AN HOUR-LONG LECTURE TO THE MALTESE PEOPLE ON TELEVISION AND RADIO APRIL 25 ABOUT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD FOR MALTA, AND THE PROBLEMS HIS GOVERNMENT MUST FACE DURING THE REMAINING TWO YEARS OF THE BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE HERE. CALLING FOR "HARD WORK AND UNITY" SO THAT MALTA CAN SUCCEED IN ITS "APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY" IN 1979, MINTOFF CLAIMED THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN BEING, OR PLANNED, WILL CREATE BADLY NEEDED JOBS. HOWEVER, AT THE SAME TIME,

HE "WARNED" MALTA'S EUROPEAN FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY FRANCE AND ITALY, THAT MORE WAS EXPECTED OF THEM TO HELP MALTA ACHIEVE ITS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. ALL IN ALL, IT WAS A FAMILIAR, AND NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE OR INSPIRING PERFORMANCE BY MINTOFF. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS UNEXPECTED, BUT SELF-STYLED, "VERY IMPORTANT" BROADCAST TO THE NATION, PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF REFERRED TO THE NEXT TWO YEARS AS DIFFICULT ONES FOR MALTA. HE STATED THAT "IN ORDER TO GET RID OF THE FOREIGNER" (I.E., THE BRITISH MILITARY FORCES), MALTA WOULD HAVE TO PAY A PRICE. OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, THE GOM WOULD HAVE TO FIND 12,000 NEW JOBS AND INVESTMENTS AMOUNTING TO 120 MILLION MALTESE POUNDS (DOLS 282 MILLION). HE ANNOUNCED THAT TOURISM WOULD HAVE TO RISE TO 500,000 PER YEAR (THERE WERE 340,000 TOURISTS IN 1976), AND THAT MALTA WOULD HAVE TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO REPLACE THE 14 MILLION MALTESE POUNDS (SIC) CURRENTLY BEING RECEIVED AS ANNUAL RENT FOR THE BRITISH MILITARY FACILITIES.

3. MINTOFF CLAIMED THAT A NUMBER OF NEW INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS BEING PLANNED WILL PROVIDE "MANY" OF THE 12,000 NEEDED JOBS. HE MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING AS PART OF THIS PROGRAM:

(A) A PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT A SECOND PORT AT MARSAXLOKK TO PROVIDE CONTAINER AND TRANSHIPMENT FACILITIES, FOR WHICH SAUDI ARABIA "IS PREPARED" TO LOAN MALTA DOLS 15 MILLION AT A LOW INTEREST RATE (THREE PERCENT) AND "TO ENCOURAGE" THEIR "RICH NEIGHBORS" ALSO TO CONTRIBUTE;
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(B) A FISHING AND TRAWLER CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, WHICH HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WITH FAO, WHICH KUWAIT HAS AGREED "IN PRINCIPLE" TO FINANCE;

(C) A PROJECT TO PURIFY DRAINAGE WATER FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES AND TO RECYCLE REFUSE INTO FERTILIZER, ALSO AGREED TO "IN PRINCIPLE" BY KUWAIT;

(D) A PROJECT TO SET UP A CENTER FOR SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY RESEARCH FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA, IN WHICH THE WHO WILL PARTICIPATE "IF MALTA CAN FIND SOME OTHER COUNTRY TO COOPERATE" AS WELL;

(E) A PROJECT TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES CENTER (AT A RECENTLY-RELEASED BRITISH MILITARY AIRFIELD AT HAL FAR) WHICH THE "THIRD WORLD FAIRS" ORGANIZATION HAS EXPRESSED A "WILLINGNESS" TO PARTICIPATE IN;

(F) AN "AGREEMENT" WITH MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES TO SET UP AIR-CRAFT MAINTENANCE WORKSHOPS IN MALTA;

(G) THE EXPANSION OF MALTA AS A TRANSHIPMENT CENTER FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN, SUCH AS HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE FOR CHINA, IS PLANNED FOR BRIZILIAN WOOD PRODUCTS, AND IS "BEING DISCUSSED" WITH OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE PHILIPPINES AND COSTA RICA.

4. TURNING TO THE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, MINTOFF STATED THAT THE IZRA U RABBI (FARMERS AND FISHERMEN) WORK CORPS WOULD, IN THE FUTURE, BE "SPONSORED" BY THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT, AND THAT "ITALIAN COOPERATIVES" ALSO HAD INDICATED AN INTEREST HELPING THIS CORPS IMPROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS. (COMMENT: FORMED IN 1975, AS ONE OF FOUR SEPARATE "WORKERS CORPS" CREATED BY MINTOFF, THERE ARE CURRENTLY ONLY SOME 385 MEMBERS OF IZRA U RABBI. IT HAS BEEN FAR FROM A SUCCESS IN ITS EFFORTS TO ATTRACT MORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKERS TO THE FARMING AND FISHING SECTORS. END COMMENT)

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5. MINTOFF THEN ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS CREATING STILL ANOTHER GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED WORK CORPS, BAHHAR U SEWWI (LITERALLY, "SAIL AND REPAIR"), WHICH WILL BE TRAINED TO OFFER THE "DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" QUICK AND RELIABLE REPAIR FACILITIES FOR THEIR INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY, SO THAT THEIR PRODUCTIVE OUTPUT WILL NOT SUFFER FROM MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS. (COMMENT: HE DID NOT INDICATE HOW MANY MALTESE WOULD BE TAKEN INTO THIS NEW CORPS, OR WHAT THEIR TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT WOULD BE. END COMMENT)

6. IN ADDITION, MINTOFF STATED THAT THE MALTESE SHOULD, "WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY" BE ABLE TO WORK IN THE OIL
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EXPLORATION SECTOR SUCH AS ON SEA AND LAND-BASED OIL RIGS, IN THE DIESEL AND ELECTRICAL MACHINERY SECTORS "IN NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES," AND IN THE REPAIR OF AIRCRAFT. (COMMENT: BEYOND MENTIONING THESE SECTORS, MINTOFF DID NOT OFFER ANY DETAILS AS TO HOW, OR WHERE, MALTESE WORKERS COULD FIND JOBS IN THEM. END COMMENT)

7. MINTOFF ALSO STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO WORK OUT A SCHEME WHEREBY GROUPS OF MALTESE WORKERS COULD BE SENT TO LIBYA AS LABORERS AND REPAIRMEN ON LIBYAN GOVERNMENT PROJECTS. HE ADMONISHED THOSE MALTESE WHO WILL BE DISCHARGED BY THE BRITISH MILITARY SERVICES OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS TO JOIN THESE GROUPS, AND NOT EXPECT JUST TO STAY IN MALTA AND BECOME MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE GOM'S OTHER DOMESTICALLY-BASED WORK CORPS. (COMMENT: THIS ISSUE HAD ARISEN A FEW DAYS EARLIER WHEN THE FIRST 30-ODD REDUNDANT MALTESE RELEASED BY THE BRITISH REFUSED EVEN TO CONSIDER GOING TO LIBYA, AND STORMED OUT OF A MEETING WITH MINTOFF ON THE SUBJECT. END COMMENT).

8. CONCERNING FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND MALTA'S PLACE AND ROLE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, MINTOFF STATED THAT THE TIME HAD ARRIVED FOR MALTA TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN WORK WHICH "UNITED THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES" AND TO BECOME A "TRUE CENTER FOR CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES" WHICH WOULD ACCOMPLISH THIS. IN THIS REGARD HE SAID THE FIRST CONFERENCE (SIC) OF THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN WILL BE HELD IN MALTA IN JUNE WITH THE "AIM OF WORKING TO FREE THE MEDITERRANEAN

OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE TWO SUPER POWERS, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION."

9. WITH REGARD TO THE COMMON MARKET, MINTOFF RECALLED THAT MALTA HAD REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC "A YEAR AGO" WHEREBY THE NINE HAD BOUND THEMSELVES TO PROVIDE "ALL THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE" FOR THE SETTING UP IN CONFIDENTIAL

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MALTA OF MORE INDUSTRIES TO CREATE JOBS. MINTOFF SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD TOLD THE EEC THAT THIS ASSISTANCE WAS NEEDED "NOW", AND THAT "MALTA COULD NOT WAIT FOR THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE MEMBER NATIONS TO MEET AND CONFIRM WHAT THE COMMISSION HAD AGREED TO". MINTOFF CLAIMED THAT THE COMMISSION HAS, THEREFORE, DECIDED THAT THE AGREEMENT WILL "BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM THIS MONTH", SO THAT EEC EXPERTS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED "WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY".

10. MINTOFF ADDED THAT IF ALL THE MALTESE WOULD WORK TOGETHER OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THEY WOULD OVERCOME THEIR DIFFICULTIES. BUT THIS WAS THE REASON THAT MALTA WAS TELLING NEIGHBORING GOVERNMENTS "WHICH HAVE AGREED WITH MALTA, AND STATED IN WRITING, THAT THE BEST ROAD FOR MALTA IN 1979 IS NON-ALIGNMENT" THAT THEY "MUST SHARE THE BURDEN" SO THAT MALTA COULD TURN FROM BEING A MILITARY FORTRESS TO "WORK FOR PEACE". MINTOFF CLAIMED THAT THIS ACHIEVEMENT WOULD BE OF AS MUCH BENEFIT TO MALTA'S NEIGHBORS AS IT WOULD BE TO THE MALTESE. THEREFORE, HE CALLED UPON EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY FRANCE AND ITALY, TO HELP MALTA ACHIEVE ITS "TARGETS FOR 1979".

11. COMENT: AFTER A BIG BUILDUP, THIS TURNED OUT TO BE JUST ANOTHER OF MINTOFF'S LONG-WINDED LECTURES CONTAINING VERY LITTLE NEW INFORMATION. THE LENGTHY RECITAL OF PLANNED INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS INCLUDED SEVERAL THAT HAVE BEEN MENTIONED BEFORE (THE MARSAXLOKK HARBOR, THE TRAWLER PROJECT, MALTA AS A TRANSHIPMENT CENTER), AND OTHERS THAT OBVIOUSLY WILL PROVIDE LITTLE OR NO ADDITIONAL DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT. AND AFTER WARNING THE MALTESE AGAIN THAT THEY HAVE TO WORK HARDER, MINTOFF'S ONLY NEW IDEA WAS STILL ANOTHER GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED WORK CORPS, ON TOP OF THE FOUR THAT ALREADY DRAIN THE ANNUAL GOM BUDGET WITHOUT BENEFITTING THE ECONOMY IN ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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SIGNIFICANT WAY. MINTOFF LOOKED, AND SOUNDED, LIKE A
MAN WITHOUT ANY REAL PLANS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS HE HAS
CREATED FOR HIMSELF. THERE WAS NOT A WORD ABOUT ANY PLANS
TO ATTRACT PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO MALTA, WHICH MIGHT
HELP THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM. AND, AS USUAL, IN DEALING
WITH WESTERN EUROPE, MINTOFF ONLY RESORTED TO THREATS
AND DEMANDS, WHILE RESERVING ALL HIS PRAISE FOR MALTA'S
"REAL FRIENDS" IN THE ARAB WORLD. AND AS IN THE PAST,
HIS ONLY MENTION OF THE UNITED STATES WAS ANOTHER
BACK-HANDED STATEMENT THAT WE SHOULD GET OUT OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN. END COMMENT. LAINGEN

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